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ABSTRACT

This course guide examines the theme of war in literary works. Works studied include the short stories of Stephen Crane, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner; novels such as "The Red Badge of Courage" and "All Quiet on the Western Front"; and a variety of poems by writers from several countries. Students' performance objectives include assembling materials that depict the various aspects of war, investigating war as a catalyst for individual and societal change, and defining the nature of war. Descriptions of course content, teaching strategies, student resources, and teacher resources are included. (LL)

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AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE QUINMESTER PROGRAM

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LANGUAGE ARTS

War as a Theme in Literature

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5115.46
5116.46
5148.12

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WAR AS A THEME IN LITERATURE

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English, World Literature

Written
for the
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Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
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COURSE NUMBER	COURSE TITLE: WAR AS A THEME IN LITERATURE
5114.46 5115.46 5116.46 5148.12	COURSE DESCRIPTION: An examination of literary works in which the major theme is war. Works to be studied include the short stories of Stephen Crane, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner; novels such as The Red Badge of Courage, All Quiet on the Western Front; and a variety of poems by writers of various countries.

I. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

A. The students will assemble selected materials that depict the various aspects of war.

B. The student will investigate war as a catalyst for individual and societal change.

C. The students will define the nature of war.

II. COURSE CONTENT

A. Rationale

Throughout history, war has been a determining factor in the prominence or deterioration of nations. Because of war, cultures have been altered and blended, language and moral values have changed, and social and economic structures have been transformed. Literature, because it mirrors the past, present, and future reflects these changes. It is through the short story, poem, and novel that we are able to view the causes and results of war. From literature, we are able to learn of the effects of war on both the society and the individual.

It is less important that the student study the war literature of a specific conflict, than it is that he come to realize the overall destructiveness and futility of war. Some classes may want to concentrate on ancient wars, such as those seen through such classic works as the Iliad. Other classes may be more interested in the literature written of current conflicts; and still others may prefer to concentrate solely on the literature that has been produced as a result of America's foreign wars or the war between the states.

So long as the student is able to study war from an objective viewpoint, the purpose of this course shall have been fulfilled.

B. Range of subject matter

1. Aspects of war

2. Effects of war

3. Nature of war

III. TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. The student will assemble selected materials that depict the various aspects of war.

1. Have students generate a list of words or expressions that come to mind when they hear the word war. Have them respond in the same way to the word peace. From these lists obtain a class consensus on the aspects of war.

2. Have students clip from magazines pictures which depict war. Appoint a committee to make a collage or bulletin board display of the pictures.

3. Have students make individual posters on various aspects of war.

4. Read to the students the following passage:

> "...they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore." Isaiah IV: 2

Pose questions such as:

a. What is the source of this passage?
b. How does it reflect man's nature?
c. Is it as timely today as it was when it was written?
d. Is it widely quoted today? (It is inscribed on a plaque in the U. N.)

5. Conduct a class discussion on the topic "Is war ever justified?" Have students cite several reasons for the position they take in the discussion.

6. Ask students to speculate upon a method for the elimination of war.

7. Have students view the film A Short Vision (1-00702), and relate it to the nature of man.

8. Have students read several selected poems that express different attitudes toward war. Have students point out these differences. The following poems available in state-adopted texts might be used.

   Carl Sandburg, "Grass"
   Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for a Doomed Youth"
   Thomas Hardy, "The Man He Killed"
   William Butler Yeats, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death"
   Siegfried Sassoon, "Does It Matter?"
   Rupert Brooke, "The Soldier"

9. Ask students to compare the attitude about war from two short stories such as Crane's "An Episode of War" and "Virtue in War."

10. Assign the reading of a short story for homework. Assign the students to small groups. In the groups have them interpret orally or in writing the attitude of the author toward war. Questions to stimulate thought for this activity might include:

    a. Did the author live during the period in which the war actually occurred?
    b. Is the war under discussion a real or fictitious war?
    c. Why did the author present the story from the point of view of a particular character?

11. Ask students to locate in their reading of a specific assignment a passage that elicits strong positive or negative response to war.

12. Have students write another ending for a short story of which the subject is war, its beginnings, or aftermath.

13. Have students write a précis of Henry Reed's "Naming of Parts."

14. Provide multiple texts for students or assign a library period during which students will locate three selections that have similar attitudes about war. Conduct a discussion in class during which students will read and compare the selections. Instruct students to look for such overall attitudes as futility, remorse, anger, revenge, etc.

The following selections are among those which are found in state-adopted textbooks.

Adventures in American Literature
- "Letter to Mrs. Bixby" — Abraham Lincoln
- "Farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia" — Robert E. Lee
- "Ode on the Confederate Dead" — Henry Timrod
- "War Is Kind" — Stephen Crane
- Red Badge of Courage — Stephen Crane

Adventures in Appreciation
- Arms and the Man — George Bernard Shaw

Major Writers of America
- Walt Whitman —
  - Poems: "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"
    "Cavalry Crossing a Ford"
    "Bivouac on a Mountain Side"
    "The Wound-Dresser"
    "Reconciliation"
  - Prose: Selections from Specimen Days:
    "A Night Battle over a Week Since"
    "A Cavalry Camp"
    "Hospitals Ensemble"
    "The Real War Will Never Get in the Books"
- "Dark Side of War" — Stephen Crane
- "The Arsenal at Springfield" — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- from Battle-Pieces and Aspects of War — Herman Melville
- "The War Prayer" — Mark Twain

American Literature: Themes and Writers

"A Mystery of Heroism" — Stephen Crane
"Concord Hymn" — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Western Literature: Themes and Writers

"Responsibility: The Pilots Who Destroyed Germany in the Spring of 1945" — Stephen Spender
"An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" — William Butler Yeats
"The Attack on the Mill" — Emile Zola

United States in Literature

"The Arsenal at Springfield" — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
"War" — George Santayana

Insight: The Experience of Literature

All Quiet on the Western Front — Erich Maria Remarque
The Iliad — Homer
Books I, VI, IX, XVI, XVIII, XX, XXII, XXIV
The Song of Roland — edited by Norma L. Goodrich
The Cid — edited by Norma L. Goodrich
Julius Caesar — William Shakespeare
Two poems: "Courage," "To the Soldiers, after a Defeat" — Tyrtarus of Sparta
"Russia 1812" — Victor Hugo

Adventures in English Literature

"To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars" — Richard Lovelace
"Fall of the Bastille" — Thomas Carlyle
"An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" — William Butler Yeats
"Epilogue to a Human Drama" — Stephen Spender
"What I Expected" — ibid
"Without That Once Clear Aim" — ibid

15. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group to read a novel. Give the following instructions to each group to use as reading of the novel progresses:

a. Find the time element of the war.
b. Find out about the particular kind of warfare and the weapons used.

c. Find the size of each army.
d. Study maps to determine the location and/or progress of the war.
e. From the dialogue in the novel, determine the reactions of the characters to the war.
f. Study the impact of the war on the people of each side of the conflict.

16. Have groups of students watch the nightly war news as presented by the three major networks. Have them compare coverage and determine the attitudes, degree of objectivity and bias.

17. Have students examine a variety of pictorial representations of war noting how the camera depicts reality.

a. TV newscasts
b. Current periodicals
c. Matthew Brady's photographs of the Civil War
d. Photographic records from World War II

18. Have students contrast photographs of war with the works of painters at various periods of history.

a. Egyptian panels
b. Bayeux Tapestry
c. Paintings of the 17th-20th centuries

Have them observe how although visual representations differ with the medium, the portrayer determines what is seen.

B. Students will investigate war as a catalyst for individual and societal change.

1. Give students a list of popular quotations and ask them to identify either the speaker or the occasion. Common quotes like the following may be used.

"I regret that I have but one life to give for my country." (Nathan Hale)
"A house divided against itself cannot stand." (Abraham Lincoln)
"Give me liberty--or give me death." (Patrick Henry)
"Better red than dead." (Slogan of Nuclear Disarmament Movement)

"My country right or wrong." (Stephen Decatur)
"Walk softly, but carry a big stick." (Theodore Roosevelt)
"We have nothing to fear but fear itself." (Franklin D. Roosevelt)
".....blood, sweat and tears." (Winston Churchill)
"God created men
Colonel Colt made them equal." (Frontier saying)

2. Have students listen to patriotic songs such as "America," "The Marine Hymn," etc.

3. Have students view the film American Time Capsule (1-01742).

4. Ask students what they associate with such holidays as Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Veterans Day. Have them evaluate how close their responses are to the original spirit of the holiday.

5. Have students compile a class list of the ten most famous Americans from 1776-197_. Have them investigate how many of the persons on the list played military roles.

6. Have students do reference work to discover how many U.S. presidents were popular military heroes prior to being elected to the presidency. Have them examine the history of other nations in the 20th Century to discover whether this is a universal phenomenon. (Students should easily identify such leaders as Churchill, DeGaulle, Franco, Ho Chi Minh, Mao Tse-Tung, and Castro.)

7. Show students a series of symbols and have them search out their origins.

   a. A knight
   b. Swastika
   c. The surfer's cross
   d. Peace symbol
   e. The dove and the olive branch
   f. Rainbow
   g. Purple Heart
   h. The American flag
   i. The Good Conduct Medal
   j. Riderless horse

8. Have students trace the etymology of some common words back to their military origin.

   a. Salary
   b. Chivalry
   c. Czar
   d. Sideburns
   e. Bellicose
   f. Worcester, Casterbridge
   g. Decimate
   h. Shibboleth
   i. Quisling
   j. Antebellum
   k. Esprit de corps
   l. Coup de grâce
   m. Cocktail

9. Have students investigate how the armed services have enriched our language. Students should discover such acronyms as GI, snafu, NATO, and Wave as well as such descriptive terms as doughboy and frogmen.

10. Have students research famous families who made their fortunes through war-related activities.

    a. Nobel
    b. Onassis
    c. DuPont
    d. Von Krupp

11. Have interested students trace weaponry from the fist to nuclear weapons. Have them present positive gains to society which have resulted from man's inventiveness in this area usually associated with destruction.

    a. Medical advances such as plasma, surgical techniques, and "guns" for inoculations
    b. Communications advances like Telstar
    c. Teflon
    d. Atomic energy used commercially and medically
    e. Radioactive "cocktails"
    f. Dynamite

g. Sports activities and equipment
h. Transportation
i. Fashions

Students might wish to present their findings pictorially.

12. Have students react to the line from the World War I song: "How're you gonna keep them down on the farm, after they've seen Paree?" They might consider such topics as:

a. War brides
b. Travel advantages
c. Foreign languages
d. Exotic foods
e. GI Bill
f. VA mortgages

Have students identify how war or its aftermath has directly affected their lives. Will they stay "down on the farm" or be like the ubiquitous Kilroy?

13. Through discussion have students determine how war affects the moral values of the people involved in war. (black marketing, smuggling, prostitution, etc.)

14. Have students read selections which demonstrate how war destroys society.

a. The Trojan Women (Euripides)
b. All My Sons (Miller)
c. "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young" (Wilfred Owen)
d. The Iliad (Homer)
e. Hiroshima (Hersey)
f. Gone with the Wind (Mitchell)
g. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee (Brown)

15. Write on the board the words revolt, revolution, and coup d'état. Have students discuss the positive and negative connotations of each. Then have students research how many existing governments of major nations resulted from these forces.

a. Bangladesh

b. United States of America
c. USSR
d. Cuba
e. Spain
f. Democratic Republic of Vietnam
g. China
h. Rhodesia

16. With the help of the librarian, have students choose literary works whose theme is war and work on some of the following tasks. Some popular literary choices are suggested.

Novels

Farewell to Arms
For Whom the Bell Tolls
Catch 22
Red Badge of Courage
All Quiet on the Western Front
A Separate Peace
Dr. Zhivago
Three Soldiers
The Caine Mutiny
The Naked and the Dead
Hiroshima
A Bell for Adano
War and Peace

Plays

What Price Glory?
Arms and the Man
All My Sons
Mother Courage and Her Children
St. Joan
Incident at Vichy
Summertree
Shakespeare's histories
Trojan Women

Poetry

Where the Steel Wind Blows (Anthology)
Selections from state-adopted texts (See A 14)

Miscellaneous

Requiem for War (Biography of Wilfred Owen and a sampling of his poems)

War and Peace (Anthology of selections in several genres)

a. In small groups list the possible ways that war might reasonably change an individual's attitude about life.
b. From the reading note how war changes individuals.
c. Write an essay from a selected work on "What character would you choose to be and why."
d. Write an essay from a selected work on "What would you do differently if you were one of the characters."
e. Discuss the kinds of adjustment necessary for an individual to make when he goes away to war.
f. From several selected poems consider the difference in the individual's reactions to war.
g. From the study of a novel or short story determine what emotions the main character felt during battle.
h. In a class discussion determine the various ways that individuals might react to battle.
i. From assigned reading give the emotional reaction of more than one character to show individual differences.
j. Identify with a particular character in a short story or novel and tell (or write) how he would react under similar circumstances.
k. Find a poem that shows fear, apathy,or disgust with war.
l. Compare a poem written by a veteran of war with one by a youth wanting to go to war.
m. Determine which character in a literary work represents that author's attitude about war.
n. Write an essay disagreeing with an author's evaluation of war.
o. Write personal views of war using war in general or a specific war.
p. Discuss critically an author's ambivalence toward war.
q. From a literary work in which the author develops his own evaluation of war restate, or identify that evaluation.

17. Have students analyze current art and music to determine the attitude of today's dreamers and visionaries toward war.

18. From the reading of poetry, ask students to decide which of the poetic forms, sonnet, epic, lyric, free or blank verse is most suited to war poetry and why.

19. Have students compare the description of battle as expressed in a literary work with factual descriptions of the same battle. Students might select the description of the Battle of Atlanta in Gone with the Wind and compare it with actual accounts.

20. Have students discuss atrocities of war: why they occur and who is to blame for them.

    a. My Lai
    b. Lidice
    c. Nuremberg Trials
    d. Auschwitz
    e. Treatment of Nisei during World War II

21. Have students identify incidents of activism in the United States which indicate strong emotional responses to real or imagined injustices.

    a. Boston Tea Party
    b. Whisky Rebellion
    c. Nat Turner's Rebellion
    d. John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry
    e. The Underground Railroad
    f. Ku Klux Klan
    g. Coxey's army
    h. Muckrakers
    i. Suffragettes
    j. Speakeasies
    h. Bonus march
    l. America Firsters
    m. Sitdown Strikes
    n. Rosie the Riveter
    o. Hippies
    p. Yippies
    q. Zippies
    r. Weathermen
    s. Drug abuse

22. On the basis of reading and class discussion, have students identify those forces at work in our culture today which reflect the impact of war(s) on society and individuals. Have them synthesize their impressions through a collage, original writing, slide-tape presentation, short documentary film, music, dance, etc.

C. Students will define the nature of war.

1. Have students confront such questions as:

a. Who wins a war?
b. Is war ever justified?
c. Distinguish between pacifism and antiwar sentiments.
d. Explain the statement: War is an enigma, hated yet embraced.
e. Debate the statement: War is inevitable.
f. What is a hero? A traitor? A patriot?
g. Can a patriot assume an antiwar stance?
h. Are all wars fought, lost, or won on the battlefield?
i. Can the "battlefield" be the human heart?
j. Is taking the life of another ever justified?
k. What is war hysteria? What is fervent patriotism?
l. What might prevent war?
m. Must the world always be divided into haves and have-nots?
n. Apply some ethical or religious code (such as the Ten Commandments) to war. Students may wish to investigate the roles of such sects as Friends, Jehovah's Witnesses, Amish.

2. Following several discussion sessions based on the above questions, the class will compose its sentiments on the nature of war.

IV. STUDENT AND TEACHER RESOURCES

A. State-adopted textbooks

Adventures in Appreciation
Adventures in American Literature
Adventures in English Literature
Encounters: Themes in Literature
American Literature: Themes and Writers
Western Literature: Themes and Writers
Major Writers of America
Insight: The Experience of Literature
United States in Literature

B. Non-state-adopted supplementary materials

1. Textbooks

Art and Man Series: Art and War. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Scholastic Magazines, Inc., 1971.

Heston, Lilla, et al. The Concerns of Man: War and Peace. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell, 1972.

2. Other reading materials.

Brecht, Bertolt. Mother Courage and Her Children. New York: Grove, 1963.

Brown, Dee. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971.

Cowan, Ron. Summertree. Westminster, M. D.: Random House, n.d.

Crane, Stephen. Complete Short Stories and Sketches. Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday, n.d.

_____. Red Badge of Courage, The. New York: Macmillan, 1966.

Cromie, Robert. Where Steel Winds Blow. New York: David McKay Co., 1968.

Dos Passos, John. Three Soldiers. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, n.d.

Euripides. Trojan Women, The. Fair Lawn, New Jersey: Oxford University Press, n.d.

Faulkner, William. Portable Faulkner. New York: Viking, 1946.

Heller, Joseph. Catch-22. New York: Dell, n.d.

Hemingway, Ernest. Farewell to Arms. New York: Scribner, 1953.

_____. For Whom the Bell Tolls. New York: Scribner, 1940.

Hemingway, Ernest, ed. Men at War: Best War Stories of All Times. New York: Berkley, n.d.

Hersey, John. Bell for Adano, A. New York: Bantam 1944.

_____. Hiroshima. New York: Bantam, 1946.

Homer. Iliad. New York: Macmillan, 1965.

Horan, James D. Matthew Brady: Historian with a Camera. New York: Crown, 1955.

Knowles, John. Separate Peace, A. New York: Macmillan, 1960.

Mailer, Norman. Naked and the Dead, The. New York: New American Library, n.d.

Miller, Arthur. Collected Plays (All My Sons). New York: Viking, 1957.

_____. Incident at Vichy. New York: Viking, n.d.

Mitchell, Margaret. Gone with the Wind. New York: Macmillan, 1939.

Crrmont, Arthur. Requiem for War: The Life of Wilfred Owen. New York: Four Winds Press, 1972.

Pasternak, Boris. Dr. Zhivago. New York: Pantheon, 1958.

Remarque, Erich Maria. All Quiet on the Western Front. New York: Crest, 1929.

Shakespeare, William. Complete Historical Plays. New York: William Collins and Sons, n.d.

Shaw, George Bernard. Arms and the Man. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, n.d.

_____. Saint Joan. Baltimore, Md.: Penguin, n.d.

Stallings, Lawrence and Maxwell Anderson. Famous American Plays (What Price Glory!). New York: Dell, n.d.

Tolstoy, Leo. War and Peace. New York: Washington Square Press, n.d.

Wouk, Herman. Caine Mutiny, The. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1951.

3. Films

American Time Capsule, 1-01742
A Short Vision, 1-00702